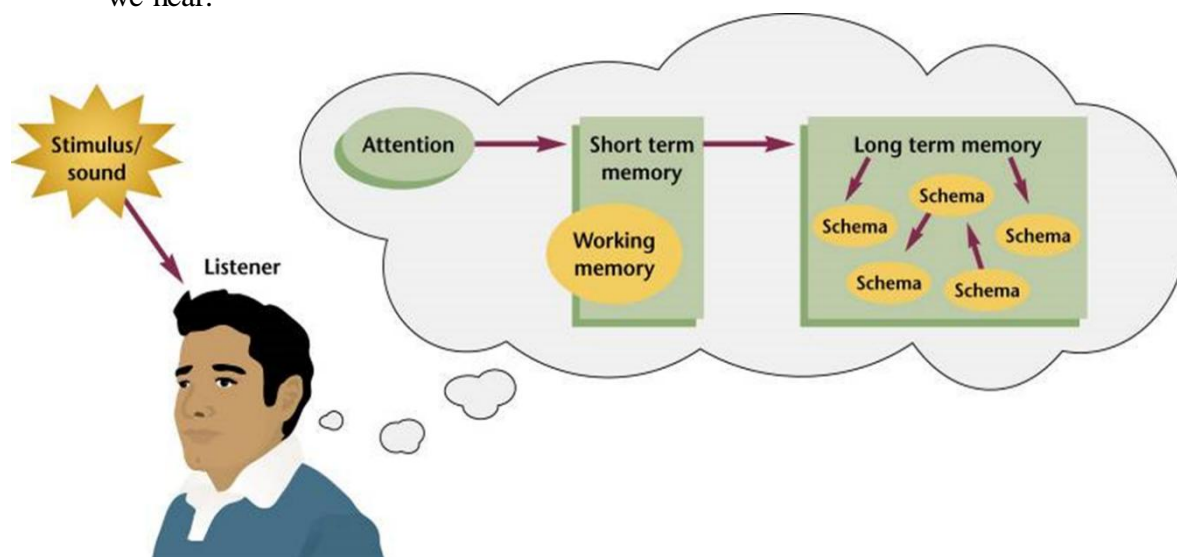


## UNIT 2 LISTENING SKILL

Listening is an important aid to communication. A survey conducted in USA, revealed that 63% of time was spent on listening, 4% on reading, 11% on writing and 22% on speaking during communication between employees. If people are bad listeners, they will also make bad communicators. Poor listening is a major cause of miscommunication.

“Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting, and reacting to a message received from the speaker”

- Sensing: How well we sense spoken words is determined by (i) our ability to sense sounds and (ii) our attentiveness.
- Filtering: Is the process of giving symbols, meanings through the unique contents of each person's mind.
- Remembering: What we hear is a part of listening. Unfortunately, we retain little of what we hear.



### IMPROVING LISTENING ABILITY

- To improve your listening, you must want to improve it.
- Be alert. Force yourself to pay attention
- Concentrate on improving your mental filtering
- Think from the speaker's view point
- Consciously try to remember
- Commandments of listening: Stop talking, put the speaker at ease, show the speaker you want to listen, remove distractions, empathize with the speaker, be patient, hold your temper, go easy on argument and criticism, ask questions, stop talking
- Concentrate on speakers words, not his looks
- Keep recalling the points
- Relate the speaker's words to your experience
- Have a positive attitude
- Listen for between-the-line messages
- Take notes

## Types of Listening:

- ❖ Appreciative listening
- ❖ Empathetic listening
- ❖ Comprehensive listening
- ❖ Critical listening

### Appreciative Listening:

- Related to a person's interest
- Provide pleasure
- Its response to a person and not to a message
- You listen because you like their style
- Content is not much important
- E.g.: when you listen to the speech of your favorite star, politician, actor etc.
- It is important for someone but different for another person –varies from person to person

### Empathetic Listening:

- When a listener is attached to the speaker by some kind of bond
- You listen carefully due to the bond you share
- Eg: your best friend is sharing their secret with you and you pay attention to their story
- A counselor or a psychiatrist listens to the patient

### Comprehensive Listening:

- Need in the classroom
- Students listen and understand as well
- Person giving a direction to a traveler – requires comprehensive listening
- Related with situation and primary concern is to understand or comprehend the message
- Variables to comprehensive listening –
  - vocabulary
  - Concentration
  - memory

### Critical Listening:

- Depends on the listener To accept or reject the message and evaluate
- Essential in democracy – accept or reject
- Listening to a sales person before making a purchase
- Politicians making their election campaign speech

### Active versus Passive Listening

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ❖ Active is paying attention                     | Passive is hearing without understanding |
| ❖ Show keenness, react, show non-verbal feedback | Does not                                 |
| ❖ Expressions- react to what they are saying     | Does not                                 |
| ❖ Alertness, focus                               | Does not                                 |
| ❖ Ask Questions                                  | Does not                                 |
| ❖ Not neglecting physical aspects                | Does not                                 |
| ❖ Valid reason for criticism                     | Does not                                 |

### **DO's**

Be mentally prepared to listen  
Evaluate the speech not the speaker  
Be unbiased to the speaker by depersonalizing your feelings  
Fight distractions by closing off sound sources  
Be open minded  
Ask questions to clarify and not to overshadow intelligence  
Paraphrase from time to time  
Send appropriate non-verbal signals time to time

### **Don'ts**

Not to pay undue emphasis on vocabulary as you can use the context to understand the meaning  
Not to pay too much attention to the accessories and clothing of the speaker  
Not to prepare your responses while the speaker is speaking  
Avoid preconceptions and prejudices  
Not to get distracted by outside influences  
Not to interrupt too often  
Not to show boredom

### **Barriers to listening**

There are many things that get in the way of listening and you should be aware of these barriers, many of which are bad habits, in order to become a more effective listener. Barriers and bad habits to effective listening can include:

- **Trying to listen to more than one conversation at a time**, this includes having the television or radio on while attempting to listen to somebody talk; being on the phone to one person and talking to another person in the same room and also being distracted by some dominant noise in the immediate environment.
- **You find the communicator attractive/unattractive** and you pay more attention to how you feel about the communicator and their physical appearance than to what they are saying. Perhaps you simply don't like the speaker - you may mentally argue with the speaker and be fast to criticize, either verbally or in your head.
- **You are not interested** in the topic/issue being discussed and become bored.
- **Not focusing** and being easily distracted, fiddling with your hair, fingers, a pen etc. or gazing out of the window or focusing on objects other than the speaker.
- **Feeling unwell or tired**, hungry, thirsty or needing to use the toilet.
- **Identifying rather than empathizing** - understanding what you are hearing but not putting yourself in the shoes of the speaker. As most of us have a lot of internal self-dialogue we spend a lot of time listening to our own thoughts and feelings - it can be difficult to switch the focus from 'I' or 'me' to 'them' or 'you'. Effective listening involves opening your mind to the views of others and attempting to feel empathetic.
- **Sympathising rather than empathising** - sympathy is not the same as empathy, you sympathise when you feel sorry for the experiences of another and to empathise is to put yourself in the position of the other person.

- **You are prejudiced or biased** by race, gender, age, religion, accent, and/or past experiences.
- **You have preconceived ideas or bias** - effective listening includes being open-minded to the ideas and opinions of others, this does not mean you have to agree but should listen and attempt to understand.
- **You make judgments**, thinking, for example that a person is not very bright or is under-qualified so there is no point listening to what they have to say.
- **Previous experiences** – we are all influenced by previous experiences in life. We respond to people based on personal appearances, how initial introductions or welcomes were received and/or previous interpersonal encounters. If we stereotype a person we become less objective and therefore less likely to listen effectively.
- **Preoccupation** - when we have a lot on our minds we can fail to listen to what is being said as we're too busy concentrating on what we're thinking about. This is particularly true when we feel stressed or worried about issues.
- **Having a Closed Mind** - we all have ideals and values that we believe to be correct and it can be difficult to listen to the views of others that contradict our own opinions. The key to effective listening and interpersonal skills more generally is the ability to have a truly open mind - to understand why others think about things differently to you and use this information to gain a better understanding of the speaker.